

**OHIO ARTS COUNCIL
BOARD MEETING
OCTOBER 26, 2022**

The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Ginger Warner at 10:15 a.m. in the offices of the Ohio Arts Council (OAC) in Columbus. Board members in attendance: Ginger Warner, chair; Tina Husted; Tom Johnson; Rita Mansour; Darryl Mehaffie; Farid Naffah; Adam Shank; Beth Waldren; Bill White; Neal Zimmers; and Rep. Sara Carruthers. Board members not in attendance: Rep. Tavia Galonski and Sen. Matt Dolan. Staff attending: Donna Collins, Dan Katona, Justin Nigro, Dia Foley, Kathy Signorino, Cat Sheridan, Chiquita Mullins Lee, Patrick Roehrenbeck, and Meredith Swortwood. Also in attendance: Atticus Muller, Office of Sen. Teresa Fedor; Anya Nelson, OAC marketing and exhibitions fellow; Hilary Damaser, assistant attorney general; Danny Eldridge, Hannah News Service; Jane D'Angelo, executive director of OhioDance; and Jarrod Hartzler, executive director of the Ohio Alliance for Arts Education.

Board Chair Ginger Warner welcomed all in attendance and asked Investment Director Dia Foley to introduce the Ohio Arts Council's (OAC) newest employee, Investment Associate Meredith Swortwood.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Warner asked the board to review minutes from its board meeting of July 20, 2022.

MOTION by Darryl Mehaffie, seconded by Tina Husted, to approve the minutes from the OAC board meeting of July 20, 2022. **Motion carried without dissent.**

CHAIR'S REPORT

Ms. Warner advanced business to seat the board's Awards Committee, responsible for reviewing Governor's Awards nominations and recommending winners for the Governor's Office consideration. Ms. Warner proposed chairing the committee and asked Beth Waldren, Tina Husted, Rita Mansour, and Bill White to serve as members.

MOTION by Neal Zimmers, seconded by Darryl Mehaffie, to approve seating the Awards Committee with Ginger Warner as chair, Beth Waldren, Tina Husted, Rita Mansour, and Bill White. **Motion carried without dissent.**

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Warner invited Executive Director Donna Collins to provide her director's report, and Ms. Collins proceeded to highlight a number of work items:

- The agency had paid about 900 board-approved grants, injecting \$12 million into the state's arts and culture sector. Partial payment proportions were increased to 85% from 75% after consulting with the Ohio Office of Budget and Management (OBM).

- The agency submitted its off-year update relative to its National Endowment for the Arts grant.
- Working with the Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board and Foundation, the OAC was helping to facilitate a commission for a new, major artwork for display in the Ohio Statehouse Rotunda on the theme “Ohioans in Space.”
- Partnering with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, the Hocking Hills Lodge and Conference Center commissioned major work from Ohio artists Kevin Lyles and Jonathan Cox.
- The final OAC Riffe Gallery exhibition of 2022, “The Nexus of Art and Health” curated by Sienna Brown, would open on October 29 and run until January 6, 2023.
- Ms. Collins had been elected secretary of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA), and several staff had presented at NASAA’s recent Assembly in Kansas City, Missouri. Ms. Collins and staff recounted that many other states looked to Ohio to improve their services and practices.

Additionally, the OAC submitted its FY 2024-2025 operating budget request to OBM. This year’s application process was simplified and more focused on impact and data, which Ms. Collins noted the agency was proud to showcase to justify its request. Unlike prior years, agencies submitted only one funding scenario and could ask for necessary resources beyond prior year appropriation levels. In preparing its request, the OAC totaled 200 organizations newly eligible to apply for Sustainability, so the request seeks funding to hold current grantees harmless in case this large influx materializes. As a result, the agency requested an additional \$11 million over the biennium, including \$9.1 million to accommodate potential growth in Sustainability, \$1.5 million to meet demand for and scale TeachArtsOhio, and administrative dollars to add two new staff and cover inflationary costs and anticipated, regular personnel cost increases.

Ms. Warner noted that the agency’s current staff of 18 would process nearly 3,100 applications and 2,200 grant awards in all 88 counties this biennium, while 10 years ago, a larger staff of 26 processed only 2,200 applications and 1,100 grant awards in about 50 counties. She said the agency had always been conservative about asking for additional administrative funding, but the need now is real and a product of demand from the field for arts grants. Rep. Sara Carruthers suggested having state lawmakers receive some sort of artistic leave-behind in conjunction with the agency’s future budget testimony, contemplating the idea of a postcard or a child’s piece of artwork as the idea was discussed among members in order to adhere to state ethics laws.

Ms. Warner then led conversation on the agency’s most recent edition of Arts Impact Ohio, its biennial professional development conference, which took place in Akron in October 2022 after being postponed from 2020 due to COVID-19. Ms. Collins provided board members with conference programs and detailed some of the content and performances, and Deputy Director Dan Katona provided information on the conference’s workshops and other

professional development opportunities. Ms. Waldren asked about the timing and location of the next conference, and Ms. Collins said a request for proposals for 2024 would be issued in the coming weeks.

QUARTERLY EXPENDITURE REPORT – FY 2022, FOURTH QUARTER

Ms. Warner turned next to lead review and consideration of the agency's quarterly expenditure report covering the fourth quarter of FY 2022.

MOTION by Neal Zimmers, seconded by Beth Waldren, to approve the quarterly expenditure report for the fourth quarter of FY 2022. **Motion carried without dissent.**

RATIFICATION REPORT

Ms. Warner reviewed the ratification report, noting that the report contains activity on the OAC's smaller grant programs where the board has authorized staff to issue grants between board meetings. The board then reviews and ratifies these items, she said.

MOTION by Darryl Mehaffie, seconded by Bill White, to approve the ratification report dated January 26, 2022. **Motion carried without dissent.**

PANELIST RECOMMENDATIONS – INDIVIDUAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Ms. Warner next led the board in reviewing the Individual Excellence Award panelist recommendations, who often live outside of Ohio to ensure that panel reviews are impartial. She asked Kathy Signorino, artist programs director, to elaborate.

Ms. Signorino said the recommendations represented a record number of panelists to accommodate the high number of applications received. In fact, panels were added in order to balance panelists' workloads, she said. In terms of reasons panelists agree to perform their duties, Ms. Signorino believed they have an opportunity to give back to the artistic community as well as build their resumes, and virtual meetings have helped to make the panels more accessible to the public and encourage panelists to take on this responsibility. Ms. Warner also attributed panelists' participation to the positive reputation of the agency.

Mr. White described how the panel process lends credibility to the agency's grantmaking and encouraged ways to promote and articulate this work through storytelling. He noted that this type of peer review also validates the awards. Ms. Signorino agreed and noted that some panelists have even moved to Ohio after learning about the state's rich creative communities. Ms. Waldren asked whether panelists were suggested by third parties, and Ms. Signorino said that there was a mix of methods used to assemble panels; some were sought out by agency staff, some were nominated by third parties, some were self-nominated, and some were put forward by the general public through an online, public-facing nomination form. Responding to Ms. Warner, Ms. Signorino affirmed that panelists do not repeat year-over-year for the Individual Excellence Awards.

MOTION by Bill White, seconded by Tina Husted, to approve the panelist recommendations.
Motion carried without dissent.

GRANT GUIDELINES FY 2024-2025

Ms. Warner introduced the OAC's draft Grant *Guidelines* for FY 2024-2025 and asked Mr. Katona and Organizational Programs Coordinator Brianna Dance to summarize revisions.

Mr. Katona began by saying this update presented some substantial changes aimed at streamlining grant programs and being responsive to feedback from the field. He projected applications to open in November and outlined several proposed changes, as follows:

- Arts Access (i.e., operating support for small organizations) would be replaced by Sustainability-Small, joining the existing Mid-Sized and Large sections of that program. This would consolidate the program, streamline offerings, and offer Arts Access grantees the chance for four-year awards instead of two without any new reporting burdens.
- The Sustainability program would be transitioned to staggered multi-year application processes for all Mid-Sized and Small applicants, allowing for the continuation of four-year awards but with 50% of applications reviewed every two years. This would smooth out the OAC's internal administrative workload into a true on-year/off-year cycle, without large spikes of reviews every fourth year. It would mirror the NEA's practice and also halve the amount of time a newly eligible applicant spends waiting until the next deadline to apply, improving access to OAC funding for mid-sized and smaller organizations. During the transitional year in FY 2024, roughly half of current Sustainability grantees would essentially have their grants extended before being asked to apply again in FY 2026.
- The Statewide Arts Services Organizations (SASO) initiative would be transitioned into a four-year operating support program alongside Sustainability. Its general guidelines would remain almost identical to those used during its four years as an initiative, with minimal expected changes to funding.
- Portions of several organizational project support programs would be consolidated into a new project support program called ArtsRISE, designed to fund projects led by members of and/or focused on the work of historically underrepresented populations or communities. This would sunset 1) Building Cultural Diversity, 2) the organizational awards portion of the Artists with Disabilities Access Program (ADAP), and 3) projects formerly eligible for Capacity Building funds for work related to serving diverse audiences. ArtsRISE awards would have sliding scale match requirements and a rolling first-come, first-served deadline modeled on FY 2022's Arts Resiliency Initiative General Operating awards. The program would use outside panelists to review proposals remotely and score independently without convening as a group, creating a streamlined and efficient review process. ArtsRISE awards would also count towards applicants' eligibility for future Sustainability/operating support.

- The Capacity Building program would be narrowed to support only organizational professional development derived via outside fees, including consultant-led work, professional development conference attendance, and training and skill-building led by outside experts.
- A new grant program for individual artists called the Artist Opportunities would be launched, modeled on ADAP for individuals. Like ADAP, the initiative would provide modest funding to both emerging and professional artists seeking to reach new audiences, develop new skills, or advance their careers.

Ms. Dance noted several moderately-sized updates, as follows:

- Program criteria in every program would be refined and simplified with an eye towards readability and clarity
- Several grant programs' request ceilings would be raised
- Funding restrictions section would be streamlined and reformatted for clarity.
- More detailed program descriptions would alert grantees as to whether grants are typically awarded in full or in part.
- Ohio Artists on Tour applications for performing artists' fee support would now be reviewed by regional coordinators rather than assigned to one staff member.
- Final *Guidelines* documents would be reformatted to freshen up their overall look, more prominently feature eligibility details, specify both the date and time of application deadlines, link to explanations of any less-commonly-used terms or phrases, and use visual cues to better explain grantee reporting deadlines and other elements of the lifecycle of each grant.

Ms. Warner Invited OAC program coordinators to provide their thoughts on the revised guidelines. Organizational Programs Coordinator Jim Szekacs appreciated the way the agency digested input from the field to improve its process and be responsive, struck a balance between organizations with many resources and those with few, and provided more clarity. Organizational Programs Coordinator Patrick Roehrenbeck liked the reduced "waiting period" for organizations to apply for Sustainability, down to two years from four, which he thought reduced barriers and acknowledged differently resourced organizations and communities; Ms. Dance agreed with these points and applauded that ArtsRISE would be a new way to establish grant history for future Sustainability support. Ms. Signorino said artists often need help with projects and basic needs, so modeling the new Artist Opportunities program after ADAP and weighting its criteria on projects was a good approach. Arts Learning Coordinator Chiquita Mullins Lee was excited about the inclusivity of the changes and looked forward to the field's response, particularly as applications continue to increase.

Ms. Warner thanked the coordinators for their feedback. She asked the board to consider a revision to the *Guidelines* to the ArtsRISE program to require no match for organizations with budget sizes less than \$100,000, to require a 1:1 match for organizations with budget sizes greater than \$100,000, and to render Sustainability-Large and SASO grantees ineligible to

apply for and be funded via ArtsRISE. This was a revision from the draft *Guidelines* which were silent on Sustainability-Large and SASO grantee eligibility and required no match for organizations with budget sizes less than \$50,000; a 50% match for organizations with budget sizes from \$50,000 to \$250,000 with inkind contributions permissive as match in addition to cash; and 1:1 cash matches for organizations with budgets greater than \$250,000. Tom Johnson agreed with the proposed revision, noting that match requirements can intimidate smaller organizations.

MOTION by Adam Shank, seconded by Bill White, to approve the Grant *Guidelines* for FY 2024-25. Mr. Shank, the movant, and Mr. White, the second, accepted a friendly amendment to amend the ArtsRISE *Guidelines* to eliminate the match requirement for organizations with budget sizes of less than \$100,000; to require 1:1 matches for organizations with budget sizes of greater than \$100,000; and to render Sustainability-Large and SASO grantees ineligible to apply for and be funded via ArtsRISE. **Motion as amended carried without dissent.**

Representative Sara Carruthers left the meeting at 11:45 a.m.

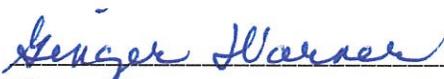
CONSTITUENT SATISFACTION SURVEY

Ms. Warner reviewed the constituent satisfaction survey, noting that customer service ratings remained very high and steady from years past, and she thanked staff for their work in being responsive and helpful to the public. Mr. Katona elaborated on the report. Ms. Waldren asked whether survey data included information from applicants who were not funded, and Mr. Katona said that survey responses are collected anonymously just after an application is complete, before awards are decided.

NEW BUSINESS: ETHICS TRAINING AND FUTURE BOARD MEETING DATE REMINDERS

Ms. Warner reminded board members to complete ethics training by December 31, 2022 and add future board meeting dates in 2023 to their calendars. She also said an additional, fifth meeting may be scheduled in winter 2022 in order to orient any newly appointed board members and discuss policy items.

The meeting adjourned at 11:54 a.m.



Ginger Warner
OAC Board Chair



Robb Hankins
OAC Board Secretary